

Take a new perspective

COACHING

Keeping the mind limber will go a long way to solving problems

A PROPORTION of our working day is spent dealing with solving problems and issues, some major and some minor.

The aim is to get them resolved as soon as possible.

In so doing, we tend to overlook the potential opportunity problems and issues present, such as our haste in getting them off the to-do list.

Equally, when we are tackling a product, process or service issue, we struggle because we rarely follow any type of process and as a result any meetings called to think about how something new can be invented, or an existing product improved gets lost in judgmental arguments usually predicated with "that will not work" or "tried it two years ago and it failed" or "no one will buy that" etc.

Sound familiar?

Well here is a very good acronym to help you with these discussions on creativity. With such meetings, an open mind will move things forward

and while that is in itself a big challenge today, we will assume that you have an open-minded team.

The acronym is SCAMPER and it is intended to keep the mind open and moving, not closed and stationary. You will need to practise the process to become familiar with the activities, and the perseverance will pay off.

Remember no idea is a bad idea in this process.

S – Substitute: Think about substituting part of your product, process or service with something else.

By looking for something to substitute, you can often come up with new ideas.

So, what can you substitute to make an improvement? What can you swap?

How could you substitute the place, time, materials or people?

C – Combine: Can you combine two, three or more parts of your challenge that results in a different product, process or service?

So, what materials, features, processes, people, products or components can you combine to form a seamless end result?

A – Adapt: Which parts of the product, process or service can you adapt?

How can you change the product, process or service?

So, what part of the product can you change? Can you exchange it? Can you change the characteristics?

M – Modify: Can you change part or all of the current situation?

By forcing yourself to come up with new ways of working, you are often prompted into an alternative product process.

So, what happens if you bend, reduce or enlarge a feature or component? What will happen if you modify the process in some way?

P – Put to other purposes: Could you use your current solution, product or process to other purposes? In reverse, can you use something from

somewhere else? Can you target another segment?

So, what other market can you use this product or service in? Where else can you use this?

E – Eliminate: What can you eliminate in your product and what might happen if you did?

This often gets the mind thinking in otherwise unexplored directions.

So, can you remove an aspect of your service or product? Can you achieve the solution following an unorthodox way?

R – Rearrange: Can you rearrange the product or process in a different order?

What would you do if you had to do it in reverse? This helps you to look at a situation from a different perspective to come up with new ideas. So, can you rearrange the order it is done or the way it is used? What is the effect that can be achieved?

Whoever you have in your group, ensure that you have a balanced group of people who will approach the issues from different angles. Otherwise you will end up with negative group thinking.

Let your mind see any problem as an opportunity – think about it?



Mr Ray Bigger is founder and managing director of Think8, a leading coaching, consulting and training company headquartered in Singapore. He has more than 25 years of sales, marketing, people and team development experience. Mr Bigger is a former English Premier League and Football League referee. Tel: (65) 6875-0104, website: www.think8.net



Have a work-related issue or problem? Write to Ray (ray@think8.net).

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